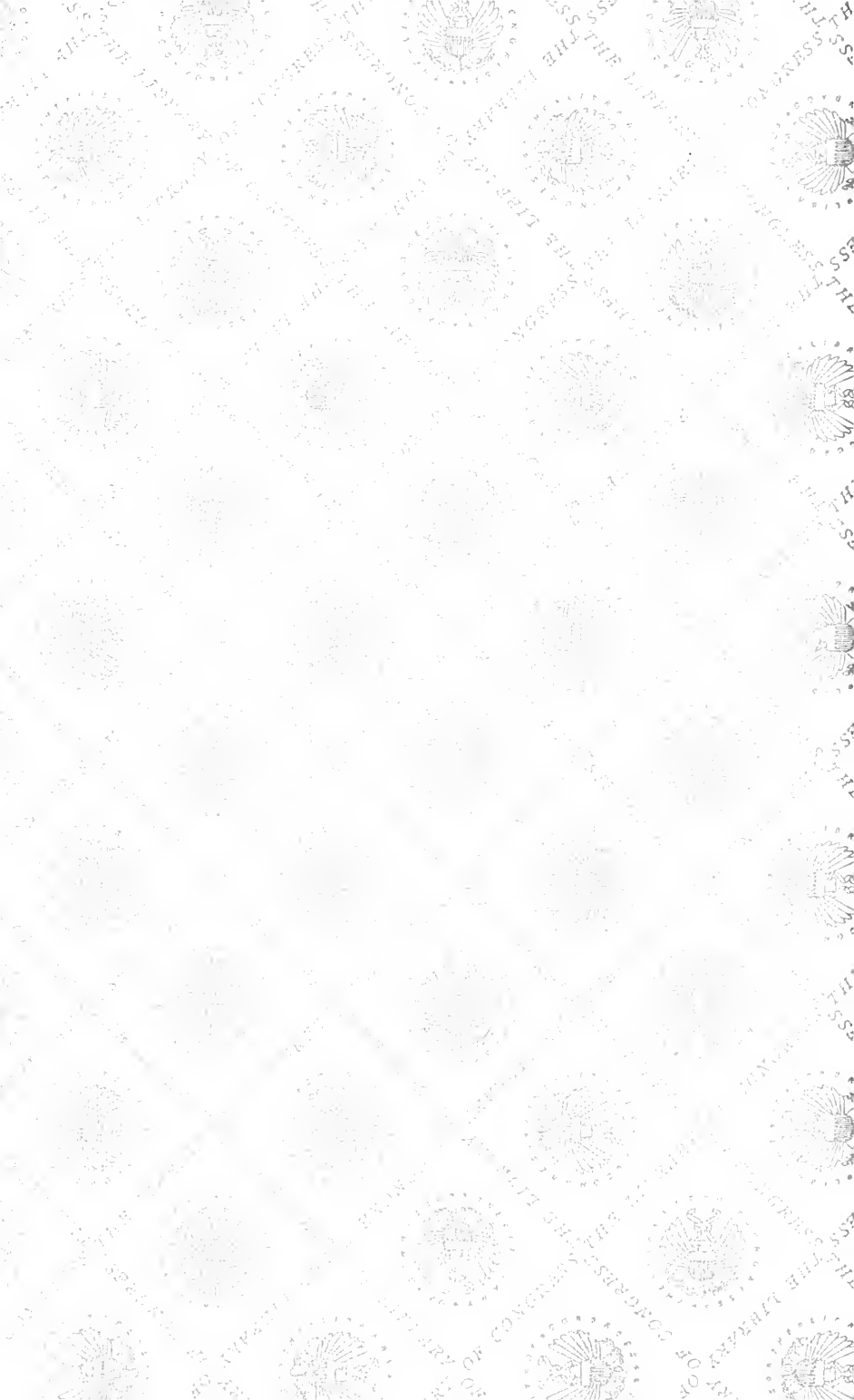
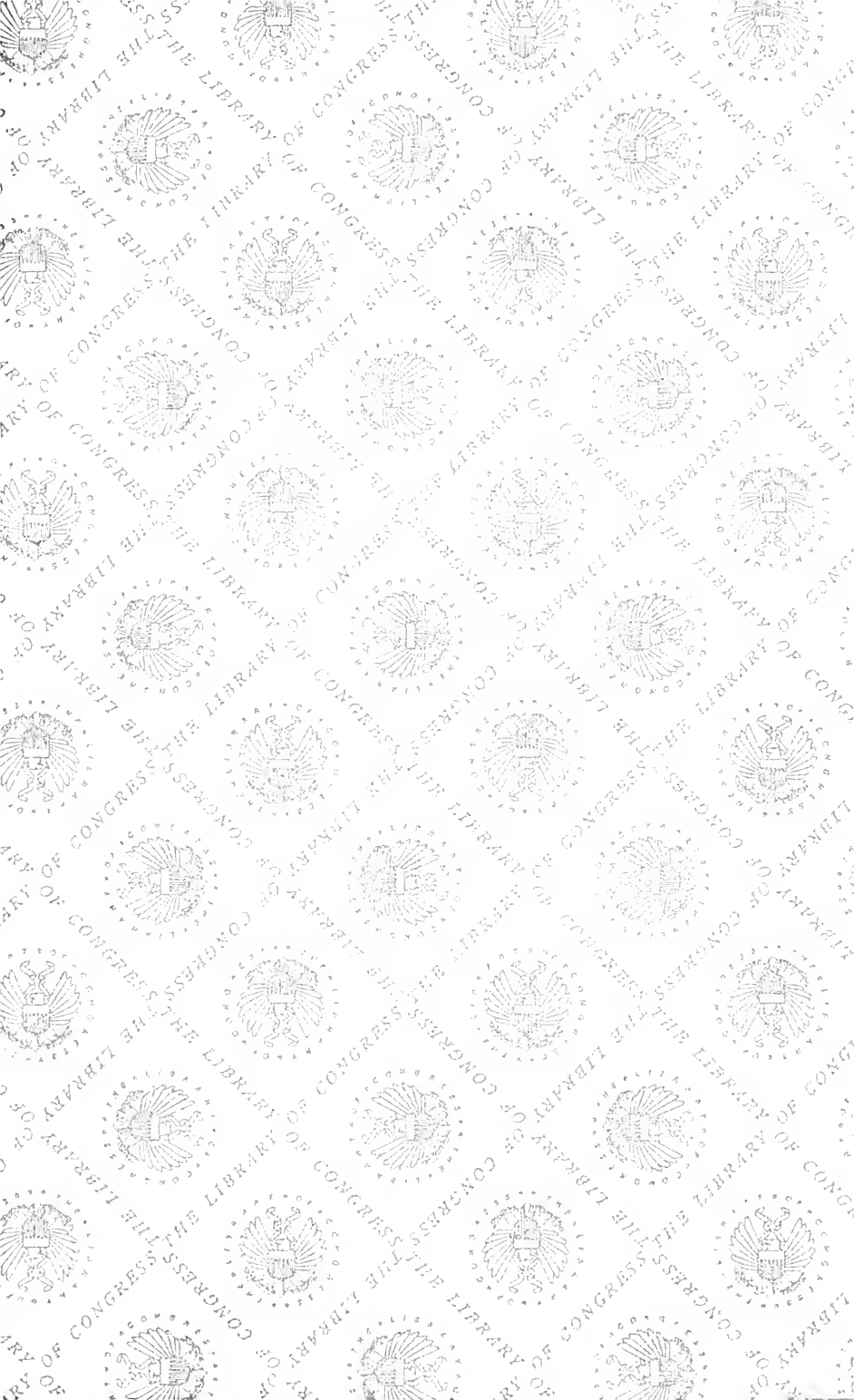


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## VINDICATION

OF THE

MILITARY CHARACTER AND SERVICES  
OF GENERAL FRANKLIN PIERCE,

BY HIS COMPANIONS IN ARMS IN MEXICO.

(Called out by the aspersions and innuendoes of a portion of the whig press.)

Since the nomination of General FRANKLIN PIERCE to the Presidency, his military character has been wantonly assailed, his services depreciated, and his courage, even, called in question. Perhaps, of all our citizen-soldiers, no man's course was more characterized by prudence, patriotism, self-disinterestedness, and a firm and heroic bravery, than this noble and high-minded gentleman. No officer more commanded the respect or won the confidence and affection of his brother officers. Endeared to his soldiers by his generous and humane conduct—at all times their counsellor and friend—sympathizing with merit wherever it was to be found, he enjoyed the rare felicity of making hosts of friends and leaving no enemy in that band of heroes who, under Gen. Scott, achieved the second conquest of Mexico. These are the men who, as one man, have risen to vindicate his character, by their united and conclusive testimony; without concert, without regard to political associations—most of them the ardent admirers of General Scott—their voices have been heard from all sections of the country, and the malevolent purposes of a base party press have been completely frustrated. This pamphlet gives characteristic selections from the immense mass of testimony. Officers of the highest rank, staff officers of the general-in-chief, and other offi-

cers, whose zeal, activity, and intelligence in no small degree contributed to the result, have here spoken. It remains to be seen whether the whole country will not frown down all attempts to asperse a true man's character, and will not pronounce him worthy of its highest honors.

The articles in the *Boston Post* are from the pen of Brevet Major Isaac I. Stevens, an officer of engineers, who served in the staff of General Scott in his Mexican campaign, and was twice brevetted by the government. They give a connected view of General Pierce's services throughout the campaign.

## No. 1.

*To the senior Editor of the Boston Post.*

WASHINGTON, June 10, 1852.

DEAR SIR: In accordance with my promise to you in Washington, I will state what I know of General Pierce's military services and character in Mexico. I shall only have to state what I have repeatedly said to mutual friends the last four years. I had no personal acquaintance with General Pierce till I met him in Mexico. Our acquaintance has its date from the battle-field of Contreras, where I was associated on duty with his command, and where it was particularly my good fortune to make the acquaintance of our own gallant New England regiment, the 3d Infantry, commanded by the intrepid and lamented Ransom. From that day to this, the fame of that regiment has been dear to me, and particularly the fame of General Pierce, the brigade commander of the regiment, its first colonel, and one who by voice and hand contributed so largely to raising it and sending it to the field.

What I shall say of General Pierce will not rest upon my individual testimony, but will simply ex-

one of the noblest and bravest men in that gallant army. General Pierce, from General Scott's headquarters, sent me two soldiers, who found in the arms of General Pierce a counsellor and friend— one who, under the pillow of disease, and poured out the deep wounds of battle. General Scott, in all his despatches, refers to General Pierce in terms of the warmest commendation, and in appointing him one of the commissioners to arrange the armistice, gave his emphatic testimony to his character and services. Well do I know, that if an insane and wicked party press shall slander his good name in connection with his military services, it will carry unspeakable sorrow and disgust to the heart of our common-renowned commander, General Scott. The mutual friendship and confidence which sprung up between these two men in Mexico has continued to this day. Each has delighted, on all proper occasions, to do justice to the other. Should General Scott be the whig candidate for the presidency, the country will be gratified with the spectacle of two of its noble sons, themselves devoted friends, being the respective standard-bearers of the two great parties. It will, indeed, under such circumstances, be a contest of honor, in which, on both sides, nothing but laurels will be won.

I well remember General Pierce's arrival at Puebla with our last reinforcements, 2,500 men. Our eyes were fixed on Mexico. The order had been given for the march. We had already heard how well that command had been conducted from the *tierra caliente* to the plains of Perote, through a country swarming with enemies. The bridge of the Plan del Rio had been broken down, and God-fish, of Maine, was already known to the whole army as having suggested and executed a simple expedient which enabled the command to cross the stream without loss. At the National Bridge it was known that Pierce, at the head of his command, cool and collected, under a shower of bullets, had forced the enemy's stronghold with but little loss to his command. His attention to the various wants of his men, his vigilance by day and by night, his skill in availing himself of the experience of his staff, his uniform good sense and his unobtrusive modesty, went before him, and had already won golden opinions for him. Indeed, we were told that frequently at night he came into camp on foot, his horse having been yielded to some feeble soldier. He seemed to have but one desire, and that was entirely to do his duty to his country and the individual men of his command.

Thus, on his arrival at Puebla, after a rapid and successful march, during the hot season and under untoward circumstances, he was warmly greeted, and drew the highest encomiums from the general-in-chief; and the command was in such good condition that the next morning the advance, under the veteran Twiggs, commenced the movement upon the capital.

Yours, &c.,

I. I. S.

No. 2.

To the senior Editor of the Boston Post.

WASHINGTON, June 11, 1852.

DEAR SIR: In my letter of yesterday I closed with Pierce's arrival in Puebla, and the conse-

quent advance of the army upon the capital. I need not go into details. We entered the valley, moved round Chalco, forced the entrenched camp at Contreras, won the splendid victory of Churubusco, and had Mexico at our feet. From the first movement against Contreras, in some thirty-two hours the enemy's force was scattered, and, as we then hoped, the great object of the campaign gained.

In these operations the brigade of Pierce shared in the flank movements upon Contreras and nobly did its duty. The operations of the 19th have been much misunderstood. The plan, from the outset of the battle, was to amuse the enemy in front by a bold demonstration, and, under cover of it, to dispatch a force against their left flank, which, occupying strong villages and the roads to the city, would cut them off from all reinforcements, and thus place them entirely at our mercy. This plan was pursued, though the movement upon the road and villages was not prosecuted with all the disposable force with the promptness that could have been desired. The staff officers in the front, fully appreciating the necessity of vigorous measures to drive back the skirmishers to the camp, and to completely deceive the enemy, recommended a very bold course. Guns and men were pushed forward with all the fierceness and unflinching constancy of a real attack. The almost impatient character of the ground is well known. The whole field was a volcanic rock of honey-comb projection, rising into sharp points at every turn and making it very difficult for strong men to make their way. Our troops were delayed but not deterred by these difficulties. First Smith and then Pierce were sent to the front simultaneously with Riley and Cadwalader to the flank and rear. Both Smith and Pierce brought up their commands in admirable order. The skirmishers were in great force in the pedregal, and resisted our advance with great vigor and confidence. The splendid pieces of Valencía from the entrenched camp were sending balls and shells through our ranks. Well do I remember their harsh and hissing accents, of all things calculated to terrify and dismay new troops.

At this moment, in face of the skirmishers, and in view of the camp, with its well-served artillery, Pierce brought up his brigade, the New England regiment, led by Ransom, in the advance. It was their first essay in the valley. As a New England man I rejoiced in their noble conduct as they rushed through the storm of fire, passing near the position of the batteries and driving the enemy's skirmishers before them. Without a pause in the attack, they forced the enemy from point to point, drove him into his camp, crossed themselves the stream flowing near his front, and took a position within three hundred yards of the main force of the enemy. This bold, unflinching, and most gallant movement did much to cause the enemy to concentrate all his troops in the camp, fixed his attention upon the front attack, and was a vital element in the success of the great flank movement and real attack against the rear of the enemy.

Pierce led his command most gallantly; but, pressing eagerly to the front, still mounted, his horse became restive under the heavy fire, plunged violently, and threw him heavily to the ground upon the sharp rocks, and injured him so severely as to disable him for a time to continue with his

command. He refers to it in his official report, and it was simply one of the many numerous accidents on that field. Many strong men fainted from sheer exhaustion. Two other general officers, Pillow and Twiggs, were unable to follow their commands. Twiggs was badly hurt by falling into one of the holes in the rocks, whilst making his way on foot, and neither of them was able to join his command till after the crowning victory of the next morning. Pierce's command, however, passed the night on the field in front of the camp, and Pierce passed the night with it.

I will reserve to another paper some account of the operations of the 20th, only observing that, at nightfall on the 19th, although the enemy had not been driven from his camp, we had gained positions surely placing the victory in our hands. Amid the pelting storms of the afternoon and night, with loss of food and sleep, our men did look forward with some anxiety to the day. But no stain of misconduct rested on a single officer or man, and each had made the firm resolve to do all and dare all for his country.

Yours, I. I. S.

No. 3.

To the senior Editor of the Boston Post.

WASHINGTON, June 15, 1852.

DEAR SIR: At the close of my second morning I left our troops at bivouac on the field of Contreras. Pierce, though badly injured and in great suffering, was in front in the midst of his command, and the brigades of Riley, Shields, Smith and Cadwalader were in the villages and on the road leading to the city of Mexico. From this strong position Smith, to whom the command had been most magnanimously yielded by his senior, Shields, in consequence of his having preceded him on the ground, and knowing from personal observation more of the field, determined to attack the entrenched camp before daylight in the morning, and break the whole of Valencia's command into pieces before succor could be brought. The camp was to be reconnoitred, the paths thereto marked, and the troops led out in the night. The rain was still falling in torrents. Scarcely a man had had food or sleep. The officers of engineers and of the staff groped their way with their hands, the path so slippery that they were constantly thrown upon the ground, and they marked the route by cutting down the maguey plant which lined the wayside. They conducted the troops by feeling their way along the cut magueys with their hands. Such were the difficulties in organizing the attack in the village. On the front, orders were received from General Scott soon after midnight—who knowing the facts of the whole field—the meditated attack of Smith and the resolution of his troops—the good spirits of the men in front under Pierce—who, in consequence, looked forward with calm confidence to a glorious victory—to organize the command, and be ready to coöperate in the attack on the camp.

Pierce had, after nightfall, withdrawn his troops from their advanced position on the rivulet, and in the pedregal, where they were necessarily much scattered, to near the base of the hill, where they were brought together and put in order to pass the night, and be ready for the duties of the morrow.

These troops, the 9th and 12th infantry, scattered bodies of the rifles and other commands, were conducted back slowly and painfully over the pedregal to the stream occupied by them the previous day, and were at dawn in readiness for the attack. This movement was judiciously conducted by Ransom, Pierce not having the physical strength, from the injuries of the previous day, to make his way through the rocks. It must be remembered that this movement was made in the dark, in the midst of rain, over sharp and slippery rocks, and one like that accomplished by Smith, decreed by the enemy to be utterly impracticable.

Thus at daylight, and struggling with such difficulties, our troops reached their positions and the attack was made. In seventeen short minutes the entrenched camp and large numbers of prisoners were in our hands. The whole command of Valencia was entirely broken into pieces. Riley in the fierce storm of the camp, Cadwalader and Dimick (temporarily commanding Smith's Brigade) in support, Shields holding the villages, and Pierce in front, first holding the attention of the enemy, thus carrying out the ideas of the previous day, and afterwards participating in the fight, all gloriously did their duty and are entitled to the gratitude of their country.

The spirit and enthusiasm of the army now rose to the culminating point; fatigue was no longer felt; the sick and feeble man became for the time well and strong; the anxious bivouac and the toils of the pedregal were forgotten. All eyes turned towards the city of Mexico; all hearts burned to pursue the enemy and strike the great blow of the war.

Yours, I. I. S.

No. 4.

To the senior Editor of the Boston Post.

WASHINGTON, June 18, 1852.

DEAR SIR: The great blow of the war was now to be struck. The spontaneous and irresistible impulse of ten thousand men in arms was promptly availed of by the commander-in-chief, and by commanders of all grades. Shields, Twiggs, Pillow, Smith, Pierce, Cadwalader, and Riley, all at the head of their respective commands, urged on our troops. Worth also put his division in movement in front of San Antonio, and, after dispersing its retreating garrison, three thousand strong, pressed forward on the high road to Mexico. It was no time for groping reconnaissances, or nice calculations as to the circumstances of the ground. The victors of Contreras drove the enemy through San Angel and Coyacan, and its advance, under Twiggs, uniting with Worth, attacked with such terrible energy the enemy retreating through the strong position of Churubusco, that there the enemy was compelled to make his final stand, some miles from the city. In a few moments the roar of cannon and the incessant rattling of musketry developed the whole field, and immediately the general-in-chief threw his reserves into the action. First Pierce and then Shields were sent to attack the enemy's right and rear, to relieve the front attack, and cut off the enemy's retreat upon the capital. It was the grand strategic movement of the field. Pierce, "just able to keep the saddle," in suffering and anguish from the accident of the previous day,

and only fit for a sick bed, at the head of his command steadily pursued his way. It was through thick corn, over wide ditches filled with water, and marshy ground. The day was oppressively hot. No actor in that field will ever forget the desperation with which it was contested, or the awful and incessant thunders of the fight. On the front the shouts of the assailants and defenders mingled in hoarse tones of defiance. For two hours the contest was maintained with equal hand, and no serious impression was made upon the enemy's line till the decisive and splendid movement of Pierce and Shields distracted his attention, and compelled him to change his order of battle.

It is not my design to go into details. Suffice it to say that after extraordinary exertions and experiencing great loss, the whole reserve, under the command of Shields, drove back the overwhelming force of the enemy, and relieved all parts of the field. Worth joined his victorious troops with Shields, the convent soon held out the white flag, and the city and valley of Mexico lay at our feet.

The foregoing narrative will show the important part assigned to Pierce at the head of the reserve to decide the fortunes of the day. It is surprising that in his feeble condition he should have undertaken to lead his troops and struggle with the difficulties of the ground. He, however, boldly led them into the presence of the enemy, and, endeavoring to make his way on foot, fell faint and exhausted under the heavy fire of that field. But his friends rejoiced that he had strength enough to do a noble, gallant, and important part. The impression which he made upon the army at this time will best be shown by the following quotations from the official reports:

General Scott says in his report of the battle of Churubusco:

"Accordingly the two advanced divisions and Shields's brigade marched from Contreras, under the immediate orders of Major General Pillow, who was now joined by the gallant Brigadier General Pierce, of his division, personally thrown out of activity, late the evening before, by a severe hurt received from the fall of his horse."

"Next (but all in ten minutes) I sent Pierce, (just able to keep his saddle,) with his brigade, (Pillow's division,) conducted by Capt. Lee, engineer, by a third road, a little farther to our left, to attack the enemy's right and rear, in order to favor the movement upon the convent, and cut off the retreat towards the capital. And, finally, Shields, senior brigadier to Pierce, with the New York and South Carolina volunteers (Quitman's division,) was ordered to follow Pierce closely, and to take command of our left wing.

"All these movements were made with the utmost alacrity by our gallant troops and commanders."

"It has been stated that some two hours and a half before, Pierce, followed closely by the volunteer brigade—both under the command of Brigadier General Shields—had been detached to our left to turn the enemy's works, to prevent the escape of the garrisons, and to oppose the extension of the enemy's numerous corps from the rear upon and around our left.

"Considering the inferior numbers of the two brigades, the objects of the movement were difficult to accomplish."

"The battle was long, hot, and varied; but ultimately success crowned the zeal and gallantry of our troops," &c.

"Brigadier General Pierce, from the hurt of the evening before, under pain and exhaustion, fainted in the action."

"Several other changes of command occurred on this field."

General Worth, in his report, says:

"The division commander cannot forego the opportunity presented to acknowledge his obligations and express his admiration of the gallant bearing of Major General Pillow and Brigadier Generals Shields, Cadwalader, and Pierce, with whom he had the gratification of concert and co-operation at various critical periods of the conflict."

General Pillow, in his report of this battle, says:

"During this movement I met with Colonels Ransom and Morgan's regiments, 12th infantry, under Capt. Wood, and the howitzer battery, under Lieut. Reno, parts of my division, forming General Pierce's brigade, which had been moved by order of the general-in-chief, under command of General Pierce, against a large body of the enemy to the right and rear of the main work, when they had been, in conjunction with Shields's brigade, engaged in a fierce, open field fight with a large force.

"General Pierce, though still suffering severely from his injury of the preceding day, had, nevertheless, been on duty, and in command of his brigade, during the day, and until a few moments before, when he had fainted from pain and exhaustion, and been carried from the field."

"I cannot withhold the expression of my sense of the deep obligations I am under for the success and honor due to my command, to my two brigadier generals, (Shields and Pierce,) whose promptitude, skill, and daring were equal to every emergency, and who, in the absence of discipline in their commands, met and overcame every obstacle, and led on their commands to honor and distinction."

The above extracts show clearly Gen. Pierce's standing in the army at that time. Great regret was expressed at his unfortunate accident, but great admiration for the noble manner in which he bore himself under it. His appointment as one of the commissioners to arrange the armistice was considered as exceedingly judicious and highly merited. It gave universal satisfaction.

Yours,

I. I. S.

No. 5.

To the senior Editor of the Boston Post.

WASHINGTON, June 4, 1852.

DEAR SIR: The armistice failed, and report was again had to arms. The bloody field of Molino and the protracted struggle for the city attested how rapidly the enemy had rallied from his defeat and the prowess and constancy of American troops. At Molino 3,000 Americans, under the gallant and lamented Worth, drove 14,000 Mexi-



cans from their chosen position into and under cover of Chepultepec. What by General Scott was expected to have been a slight brush, proved to be the most terrible conflict of the war, and the brigades of Pierce and Riley were ordered up to support it. Thus General Scott, in his report, states: " \* \* But the battle was won just as Brigadier General Pierce reached the ground and interposed his corps between Garland's brigade (Worth's division) and the retreating enemy."

This gave offence to Worth, as intimating that without Pierce his own command would not have maintained the field; whereas the particular expression grew out of the gallant manner in which Pierce brought his command to its assigned position, and which was observed by Scott from a commanding position, where he overlooked the whole field. Within three days officers in this city, of the old army, have spoken of it with great admiration. Two, who accompanied Pierce to his position, speak of his extraordinary coolness and composure as a shell came screaming from Chepultepec through the ranks of his command. From its direction every one feared that it would strike Pierce, and kill both him and his horse. Happily no one was injured.

In the final operations about Chepultepec it was necessary, as a preliminary step, to reoccupy the field of Molino, and in that position to plant batteries against Chepultepec. Our troops had been withdrawn from the position since the battle of the 8th. Pillow's division, Cadwalader's and Pierce's brigades, were ordered to drive the enemy from it, and hold it against whatever force might be brought against them. The order was gallantly executed; but the enemy had been previously withdrawn. Pierce marched out with his command early in the morning of the 12th September, and though scarcely able to move a step, from his enfeebled condition, growing out of his great exertions in bringing up his command at Puebla, and from fatigue and exposure at Contreras and Churubusco, he remained in the field till mid-day, when the batteries were playing upon Chepultepec, and when it was certain that no further active operations would be prosecuted during the day. He then reluctantly returned to the quarters of General Worth, in the village of Tacubaya, a short distance only from the field, so prostrated that he was not able to leave his bed for some thirty-six hours. It is one of the saddest experiences to a gallant and patriotic soldier to be prevented by sickness, wounds, or infirmity, from sharing the glories and dangers of the battle-field with his companions in arms. Twiggs was thus thrown out of the earlier operations at Monterey; Persifor F. Smith at Cerro Gordo; the gallant Colonel C. F. Smith—perhaps the model soldier of the old army—from Molino. So with Pierce. I have often conversed with Worth's officers in relation to Pierce. Attracted by his frank and cordial manners, they esteemed him for his manly and disinterested character, and had unbounded confidence in his prudence, judgment, and gallantry. They speak of his despondency at not being able to lead his men in the last great battle of the valley. But he felt in a measure consoled from the reflection that his own gallant staff-officers were in the field, and that his intrepid friend Ransom—his first choice to command the New England regiment—was to lead them. Alas!

poor Ransom. Not only a bright ornament to his own New England, but to the whole country—one of the noblest and best soldiers in that memorable campaign—leading his regiment with consummate skill, and prepared to fall with his usual ardor, he was shot through the head, and fell a willing sacrifice to his country.

This is not the place to describe how Chepultepec yielded to the firm, unyielding and enthusiastic assault of our troops under Pillow and Quitman, or how Quitman and Worth, on the two great causeways of approach, drove the enemy into the city and took possession of the gates of Belen and of Cosme. The resistance at both points was stern and protracted. Santa Ana was in the front ranks, cheering on and leading his men at every point of danger. It is due to his extraordinary gallantry and exertion that, at night-fall, he retained possession of the city. Quitman, after securing the Belen gate at half-past one o'clock, was obliged to cover his troops the remainder of the day. He could not move a step under the pitiless and terrible fire of the citadel. Worth occupied one square within the Cosme gate, strong and easily defensible buildings being still in the hands of the enemy to repel his further progress.

In these positions our troops passed the night. Both Quitman and Worth made preparations to storm the city in the morning. Quitman strengthened and enlarged his batteries with the determination to batter and storm the citadel. Pierce at his solitary quarters, towards dark, learned from Captain Harcastle, just from Worth, whose room he occupied, how affairs stood, and that the final struggle for the mastery in the valley would take place the next morning. "The city will be stormed and the final victory of the war will be achieved to-morrow," says Harcastle. "I will then join my command immediately," replied Pierce, and he got up and attempted to dress himself. Harcastle, however, remonstrated and urged him to remain in bed till morning to save his strength, saying to him that his services would not be needed till then. He acquiesced, and learned from Harcastle the further particulars of the field. The greater portion of his own brigade was with Quitman, a portion with Worth. Quitman's position under the fire of the citadel was one of vastly more danger and difficulty than Worth's. The square within the garita occupied by Worth led at once into the heart of the city, and his advance by the slow process of the miner was certain. Quitman could only assault the citadel by passing over an open space, and the citadel itself was separated from the adjacent suburb of the city.

Pierce in the course of the night joined Quitman, in readiness for the morn. It is true that commissioners passed through Worth's command in the night, and announced to General Scott at Tacubaya that the city was evacuated. But this was known to very few persons in the army, and as General Scott refused to listen to the terms proposed by the commissioners, these few feared the army would return and do battle for the city.

At dawn, therefore, Quitman made his arrangements to commence the attack, and it was not till broad daylight that, by personal observation, he discovered that the citadel had been abandoned. He pushed on with his command, and soon seized

the National Palace, and hoisted thereon our own glorious stars and stripes.

During the day a desultory street fight was kept up, many officers and men were killed and wounded, and not till the night of the 14th was the city completely in our hands.

In the first encounter, therefore, Pierce led his command to the Molino, where a severe battle was expected, and remained on the ground all day, as certain the attack would not be made all the following day, and after confinement, from utter prostration, to his sick bed for thirty-six hours, he joined in the night his command at the point of greatest difficulty and danger, when on all sides the final battle was expected to come off. It redounds especially to his credit, and shows his gallantry and resolution, his assuming the command of his brigade at these two critical junctures.

I shall reserve to my sixth and last article a summary of the five articles which I have prepared, with some general observations.

Yours, I. I. S.

No. 6.

*To the senior Editor of the Boston Post.*

WASHINGTON, July 1, 1852.

In the view which I have presented of General Pierce's services in Mexico, I have endeavored to grasp briefly the whole field of operations, so that your readers might see for themselves that Gen. Pierce's part was not unimportant, and that on all occasions his conduct was marked by great gallantry and true-hearted devotion to his country. I will now recapitulate his services in this closing number of the series, and will conclude with some general observations.

General Pierce landed at Vera Cruz in June. There, after the most indefatigable exertions for three weeks, during the hot and exhausting season of the yellow fever, he succeeded in organizing his trains and commenced his march into the interior in July with our last reinforcement, 2,500 men. The intervening country was filled with guerillas. The bridges were broken down. Yet, by great prudence and good judgment, he kept up the discipline and health of his troops and made good marches every day. At the National Bridge he was conspicuous for his great gallantry, and at that and at all points he promptly dispersed the guerillas with but little loss to his command. On his arrival in Puebla he was hailed with joy by the whole army, who awarded to him and his men the character of veterans for the steadiness of their conduct under such hazardous and trying circumstances.

In the majestic movement on Mexico, in the toilsome march round Chalco, and in the brilliant achievements at the south and west of the city, Pierce uniformly managed his command with judgment, and inspired his men and the army with confidence in his capacity and resources.

At Contreras, ordered up as a support against the front, he took the lead, drove the enemy into his camp, and maintained an advance position for many hours, winning the admiration of all men by the gallantry and vigor of the movement. Though badly hurt, he continued in command of his brigade throughout the day and night, and slept on the field with it. At Churubusco he conducted the great strategic movement against the right

and rear of the enemy—a movement that was to decide the fortunes of the day, and where overwhelming odds were to be encountered and beaten. This movement he nobly led, though enfeebled to the last degree and scarcely able to keep his seat. He took his command into action, gave his men an example of conduct in his own person, and, whilst making his way on foot, fell to the ground, unable to move a single step. It was an act of heroism, his venturing at all into the field in his sick and weak condition. But such things were common with that whole band of heroes. The idea was, our last breath and all our remaining strength for our country.

His appointment as commissioner to arrange the terms of the armistice illustrates the estimation in which he was held. These appointments are considered in the highest degree honorary, and they have a significance not to be measured by the magnitude or difficulty of the duties involved in them. The intelligence, the valor and the character of the whole army are to be represented in the persons of its commissioners.

At Molino, at Chapultepec, and at the Belen gate, Pierce acted a characteristic part. At Molino he brought his command to its position under the fire of Chapultepec, and with a coolness and gallantry which inspired his whole command. He left his sick bed to be present at the earlier operations against Chapultepec, and when obliged to retire from the field from utter prostration, he left his bed again in the middle of the night and repaired emphatically to the point of danger, to take part in what was supposed would be the last and crowning and most perilous act of the great drama. The merit on the part of Pierce was not less that the enemy had evacuated the city, and that the remaining operations were nothing but street fights. It is uncontroverted and incontrovertible that he joined Quitman hours before dawn, expecting a great battle was to come off, and Quitman, in his official report, acknowledges the fact with many thanks.

Thus it will be seen, not only that Pierce was on all occasions gallant and judicious, but that he was eminently disinterested and regardless of personal toils and sacrifices. He would not let untoward accidents drive him from the field. He would lead his command to the post of danger when most men would have gone to their beds. And he would leave his sick bed, although his friends advised and beseeched him to the contrary, in order to be at his post at these critical moments, when the fate of events was to be decided.

But there is a less brilliant, yet more touching and interesting view to be taken of General Pierce's services. I refer to his unceasing care and attention to his sick and wounded men. Not only did he give liberally of his means to provide for their wants, but he bestowed his time and spared nothing which would alleviate their hard lot. Perhaps of all the qualities which lead to great achievements, this noble humanity is the very first. Men will die for those they love. Discipline, to be in the highest degree efficient, should both be a spontaneous impulse of the heart and rest on principle. A chief should make it his determination to possess the love and esteem of every man under his command, by disinterestedness and entire devotion to them. He must be their friend—their father. Soldiers are in some respects very much like chil-

dren. They have a child's faith in men deserving of it, and they will follow a beloved commander through all perils, and will achieve all but impossibilities.

All persons who knew General Pierce in Mexico know how warmly he attached his men to him, and how admirably he discharged this crowning duty of a commander. The affectionate welcome that was extended to him on his return home was a natural consequence of the noble disinterestedness he had shown away from home.

I will now dwell on certain general facts in General Pierce's course during the Mexican war which caused me to value highly his opinions and to cherish his friendship. They grew out of that thorough manliness, disinterestedness, and modesty, which have marked his whole course in life.

It seems to have been a guiding principle with General Pierce to strive to see things as they really were—to share in the prejudices of none, neither to attach himself to cliques nor to have a clique of his own—and to do justice to and deserve the confidence of all. Thus, having found that certain views which he had entertained in relation to the Military Academy and the regular officers were unfounded, he hastened to vindicate both, and on all occasions took pleasure in acknowledging his mistake. He soon became satisfied that he had not appreciated the great qualities of General Scott. On his return home he vindicated the services and character of that illustrious commander. Yet whilst admiring and doing justice to Scott, he could but deplore that general order which led to the preferment of charges against Worth and Pillow, and which finally caused the President to relieve General Scott from the command of the army.

Worth was a gallant soldier and an able commander. Pillow, with all his impulse and overconfidence, was fast rising as an able military man, and in the last conflict did signal service, and Pierce appreciated and did justice to the services of both. This beautiful and strong trait of his character, enabling him to discern merit in spite of clashing cliques and discordant interests, which made him solicitous that justice should be done to all, and which made him careless of himself, could not but have commanded the confidence and won the affection of his companions in arms. You can readily understand, Mr Editor, why the old army are attached to him and will vindicate his fame. He has done justice to them; he has borne testimony to the services and character of their illustrious chief, and they, including that chief, now his friendly rival for the first place in all this world, will do justice to him.

His services in Mexico have served to make known to the whole country those traits of character which have secured the unbounded affection of the people of his own State, and which so eminently fit him for the chief place. This coming presidential contest is not between the soldier Pierce and the soldier Scott, for Scott's reputation is deservedly world-wide, and may be to the end of a long life continue to adorn his high post of the chief of the army. Pierce's military services are but a laurel in his beautiful civic wreath—a sacrifice of patriotism on the altar of his country—a crowning fact in a life of distinguished civil service.

Yours, &c.,

I. I. S.

Colonel Smith, the writer of the following letter, was fifteen years a resident of the city of Mexico before the war. He was the Good Samaritan to our captured officers and soldiers, and as such made himself obnoxious to the Mexican authorities. He succeeded, after great danger and privation, in escaping from the city of Mexico and joining the army in Puebla, and there he was of invaluable assistance in furnishing information as to the route to, and the resources of, the Mexican capital. In the march to, and in the operations about, the city, he was exceedingly useful as an aid to the general-in-chief, and was conspicuous for his gallantry. Colonel Smith was well known to all the actors in the operations in the valley of Mexico, and his name is ever mentioned by them in terms of respect and admiration.

[From the Boston Courier, (whig.)]

GILMANTON, N. H., June 24, 1852.

You are probably aware that at the commencement of the war with Mexico I had been more than fifteen years a resident of the city of the Aztecs. During the war I was twice expelled from the city, the suspicions of the government having been awakened and its displeasure incurred in consequence of the manner in which I treated Major Gaines, Major Borland, and the other Encarnacion prisoners. Immediately after the second order for my expulsion, desiring to control my own movements, I made my escape, passed the mountains in two nights, on horseback, having bribed a famous guerilla chief, Colin, who accompanied me with five of his desperate associates. I carried despatches from ——— to General Scott, (then at Puebla,) which I delivered at four o'clock in the morning, and afterwards continued with the noble commander—he availing himself of my minute knowledge of the country—until I again entered the city with the American army. I arrived at Puebla two days before General Pierce's brigade arrived there—and was never prouder of my country, and never so proud of my native State, as when that fine command marched into the city. All balconies were crowded, and such a reinforcement spread general joy through the army. The circumstances of the march, the energetic, prudent, and skillful manner in which it had been performed—the daring courage manifested by the commander, particularly in crossing the National Bridge, when his hat was shot from his head—were, of course, the subjects of much conversation, and secured for General Pierce high admiration and entire confidence. And these, I may safely say, were never abated during the campaign.

I do not propose to give you details of that campaign, but to state some facts within my own

knowledge in relation to the operations of the 19th and 20th of August, and the 8th of September. On the 19th August I was at St. Augustine, about seven miles from Contreras. Pierce's brigade marched out early to open the road across the mountain for the artillery which followed that afternoon. I did not see General Pierce again till near noon the next day. I had been with Gen. Scott's staff all the morning of the 20th, and had heard of the dangerous injury Gen. Pierce had sustained by the fall of his horse on the pedregal the afternoon before. The horse was supposed to have caught his fore-foot in the cleft of a rock, being at a hard gallop. The preservation of the life of the General seems here, as at the National Bridge, to have been providential. Although the bones of the horse were broken, so that he was left upon the spot, the tenacity with which the rider held to his command, during that day and the next, was the wonder of all. He rode during the residue of that evening the horse of the gallant Lieutenant Johnson, who had just been shot in his saddle.

I met Gen. Pierce on the 20th, near Coyacan. Gen. Twigg's division had advanced on the road towards the church at Churubusco, and when I met Pierce the heavy firing of the batteries had opened. I shall never forget his appearance as he rode at the head of that noble brigade, destined to suffer so terribly in the afternoon. He was exceedingly thin—worn down by the fatigue and pain of the day and night before—and then evidently suffering severely. Still, there was a glow in his eye, as the cannon boomed, that showed within him a spirit ready for the conflict.

The brigade was soon formed on the west side of the plaza of Coyacan, opposite the church. I was familiar with all the roads and paths in that neighborhood, and informed Gen. Scott, who was in his saddle, under a tree, near the church from which he was issuing orders to different members of his staff, that I knew a route by which the enemy could be attacked in rear. Having decided at once to send Pierce's brigade, and to support it by other troops that might be at his command, he despatched me to call Gen. Pierce. I did so; and when he rode up, a conversation, in substance, and, as near as I can recollect, in the following words, took place:

General Scott said, "Pierce, my dear fellow, you are badly injured—you are not fit to be in your saddle." "Yes, I am," said Pierce, "in a case like this." General Scott said—"It is temerity; we shall lose you, and cannot spare you. I ought to order you back to St. Augustine. You cannot touch your foot to the stirrup." "I can, one of them," said Pierce, "and that is enough for to-day. This will be the last great fight, and I must lead my brigade." The order was then given, I acting as guide by the direction of General Scott; Major Lec, of the engineer corps, accompanying the command. The brigade moved rapidly forward for about a mile, when we came to a ditch, as I recollect, ten or twelve feet wide, and six or eight deep. Pierce was lifted from his saddle, and as if to tread upon impossibilities, he led the brigade, then under fire, in his crippled condition, for a considerable distance on foot, when he fell from exhaustion and suffering, too great even for his energies. He refused to be carried from the field, and remained till the final route

of the enemy. More inflexible determination and daring courage I do not believe were ever exhibited upon a battle-field.

On the night before the battle of Molino del Rey, General Pierce's brigade was at the hacienda of San Borja, about one mile from Tacubaya, where it had been held from earliest dawn under arms. You know how General Worth's most gallant division suffered. The carnage on the field was dreadful. General Scott despatched me to accompany my friend Major Gaines with an order for Pierce to advance. They were ready in an instant, and moved rapidly forward. I was upon the field, and witnessed Pierce's fine movement upon the King's Mill, to relieve Colonel Garland, who had been fighting till that hour. He advanced with the 9th infantry, (and, as I recollect, 21 artillery, not of his brigade proper.) The enemy, whose fire had nearly ceased, upon the movement of these new regiments, reopened with round shot and shell from Chapultepec. I well remember that the bay horse which the General took from the States became, under fire, difficult to manage, and was well nigh plunging over a precipice close by the King's Mill at the bridge, in consequence of the bursting of a shell but a few feet from him. Nothing could have been more cool and admirable than this whole movement.

I made the acquaintance of General Pierce thousands of miles from our native land, under circumstances that "tried men's souls." I found him there what all know him to be here, and I cannot withhold this act of justice from one who has as brave a heart, and as self-sacrificing a spirit, as ever warmed a true man's bosom. I know General Pierce needs no vindication of his military conduct. His merit in this respect is proclaimed by the united voice of officers and men—those who participated and who know. But, at the same time, he may not be displeased with these hasty reminiscences from me. I have been so long from the country, that I feel but little interest in mere party conflicts.

Your obedient servant,

NOAH E. SMITH.

The article from which the following extracts are made is taken from the *Louisiana Courier*, and was written by an officer of engineers who served with great distinction in the Mexican war. It may be added that this able, truthful, and accomplished officer (not only an honor to Louisiana, but the pride and ornament of that glorious French race to which he owes his origin) served on the staff of General Scott from Vera Cruz to Mexico, was on duty at Contreras with Pierce's brigade, and was the *only* officer of engineers who, at the celebrated council of Piedad, advised General Scott to make the attack upon Chapultepec.

[From the Louisiana Courier.]

## GENERAL PIERCE IN MEXICO.

NEW ORLEANS, July 3, 1852.

Col. J. F. H. Claiborne:

DEAR SIR: In the New Orleans Bee of the 2d instant, I perceive an assertion relative to the military services of General Pierce, which is so erroneous and unjust towards that gentleman that, having had the honor of serving with him, I cannot allow it to pass unrefuted; others, less charitable than the Bee, have even gone so far as to accuse him indirectly of cowardice! It was my luck during the war with Mexico to see or hear of no cowards in our small but gallant army—especially among our general officers, some of whom, on the contrary, on too many occasions, were but too rash and impetuous.

The article referred to says: "He (Gen. P.) was present at none of the battles fought by Gen. Scott;" and further on, "that his only exploits during the war with Mexico were limited to a fall from his horse and a sprain!" Now, this is a bold assertion, which arises, no doubt, from a proper want of information on the subject. \* \* \* In the first place, a few days after the arrival of Gen. Pierce at Vera Cruz, in the month of July, he had organized and equipped nearly 2,500 new levies, volunteers and recruits, for the army then at Puebla, notwithstanding all the difficulties he had to encounter. He started from Vera Cruz on the 19th of July, and, after many difficulties encountered on the route, and being harassed constantly by the guerillas, (Ripley's History of the War with Mexico, p. 164, vol. 2d,) under that celebrated chief and robber, Padre Jaruta, he arrived in safety with his command at Puebla on the 6th of August, "having lost but few of his men from sickness and the desultory fire of the guerillas."

At the battle of Contreras I had the opportunity to see him under a heavy fire of shells and shot, before his horse had fallen upon him, and saw nothing in his manner and looks, notwithstanding the novelty of the position to him, (for this was rather a different affair from his guerilla warfare,) which could have possibly been interpreted as the sentiment of fear or irresolution, let alone that of cowardice. On the contrary, he appeared to me to be quite at home for a new hand at the business.

To any one who has ever seen the "pedregal," which had to be crossed at the battle of Contreras to get at the entrenched camp of Valencia, the wonder is, not that the General's horse "should have fallen and sprained the General's foot," but that he should not have broken his neck; for those who were dismounted had the utmost difficulty to get across that broken and rugged country, and under any other circumstances than those we were placed in, we would have hesitated a long time before making the attempt. "Pierce's brigade was at once ordered to the front. With his two remaining regiments, Pierce pressed rapidly forward."

Now, the General kept on his horse at the head of his column as long as the nature of the ground had permitted it; but when he had got on the field near the enemy's line, along the road to the city of Mexico from the rear of the *tete de pont*, in advance of the bridge of Churubusco, the ground

became so cut up with wide and deep ditches, that, having alighted from his horse to endeavor to advance still further, he soon became exhausted from the intense pain he was suffering, and which every new effort of his increased ten-fold. He at last found it utterly impossible to go any further; and notwithstanding he was exposed there, also, to a heavy fire of musketry and scorpions, he remained there, urging his men forward, until the enemy's line was broken and dispersed.

Any one who has ever been so unfortunate as to be afflicted with a sprain, can but admire the energy and power of endurance displayed on this occasion by General Pierce, and those who beheld him at the time could but admire his coolness and courage.

On the morning of the 11th of September, before making our last grand effort to enter the city of Mexico, the general-in-chief held a meeting of his general and engineer officers at the village of Piedad; and after having explained his views as to the best point for attacking the city, which was by Chapultepec and its western gates, he called upon those present for their opinion unbiased by what he had said upon the subject, that he might make up his mind and give the necessary orders for the attack before the meeting was broken up. They all opined for an attack by the southern gates, with the exception of Generals Twiggs and Pierce and one engineer officer, who all three sustained the views of the general-in-chief, which were finally adopted, and resulted in the brilliant and successful achievements of Chapultepec and the Garitas of Eden and San Cosme.

The officers of his personal staff were intimate friends of mine, and I never heard them speak of him but in terms of friendship and admiration, not only for his coolness, courage, and intrepidity when under the fire of the enemy, but also for his kind, polite, and unpretending manners, his warm, impulsive, and generous nature, which always prompted him to ascribe to others the credit of things which he might with due propriety have attributed to himself.

I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

A LOOKER-ON IN VENICE.

It may be added to the comments of the *Louisiana Courier* upon the Bayou Goula letter, that its writer is believed to be a distinguished graduate of the Military Academy, who, after serving about two years in the corps of engineers of the United States army, resigned his commission, and accepted the position of State engineer of Louisiana. He is well known in that State as a successful planter and a high-minded citizen. In Mexico he served with great distinction in high command.

BAYOU GOULA, LA., June 21, 1852.

Col. J. F. H. Claiborne:

MY DEAR SIR: The political history of General Franklin Pierce is on record, and open to every-

body. I wish to speak of him as a gentleman and soldier, for as such I knew him.

In the latter part of June, 1847, I found myself encamped near Vera Cruz, en route to join Gen. Scott at Puebla. General Pierce arrived from the north with the 9th regiment, then commanded by the gallant and lamented Col. Ransom, who was afterwards shot dead, through the head, at the storming of Chepultepec. \* \* \*

Brigadier General Pierce, for a new hand at the business, had a great deal to do. He was found, however, equal to the task; prompt, energetic, clear-headed, and, unlike some citizen appointments, not afraid or ashamed to ask, when in doubt, advice from regular and experienced officers of the army. Owing to the exertions of Gen. Pierce and Col. Wilson, the brigade was organized and equipped much sooner than could have been reasonably expected, and we left for Puebla. As was expected, the advancing column was harassed all along the route by the "guerillas," under command of that troublesome and persevering military padre, Jarauta. Whenever fired upon, the General invariably moved to the front, exposing himself as a common soldier. At the "Paso de los Ovejos," "National Bridge," "Plan del Rio," at all of which places our progress was opposed, the General led the column. I speak from the book, as I was there and saw him. At the National Bridge he got through his *fall hat* an escopette ball, which, had it ranged an inch lower, would have saved him the trouble of running for the presidency. The march to Puebla was rapid—the brigade arriving in good order, and ready to go into action. The next day the first division left for Mexico under Gen. Twiggs.

Gen. Pierce was in all the battles of the valley, and everywhere did his duty faithfully and gallantly, as the reports of the commander-in-chief, Gen. Scott himself, will show. To these I refer the skeptical on this point. On the evening of the 19th of August, during the first attack on Contreras, Gen. Pierce was severely injured by his horse falling upon him. By the way, it is a matter of wonder that we did not all break our necks in that infernal pedregal. It was enough to put every one "*hors de combat*;" but with indomitable courage and fortitude, under excruciating pain, he was assisted on his horse next day, and led his command in both the battles of Contreras and Churubusco.

*Extracts of a letter from General Shields to a committee of citizens of Illinois.*

[From the Washington Union.]

WASHINGTON, August 5, 1852.

GENTLEMEN: \* \* \* General Pierce landed with his brigade at Vera Cruz in June, 1847; marched from there to Puebla, where he joined the headquarters of the army on the 6th of August. On this march, which was very severe on fresh levies, his brigade was constantly harassed and attacked by large parties of guerillas. It was the universal opinion amongst military men in Puebla at that time that General Pierce conducted the march with uncommon ability, and exhibited remarkable skill and courage in his conflicts with the enemy.

Soon after his arrival he entered the valley of

Mexico. The battle of Contreras opened the campaign in that valley on the 19th of August. Pierce's brigade took a very active part in that engagement. He himself commanded in person on that occasion, and behaved with acknowledged gallantry; and though very severely injured by a fall from his horse—or rather by the fall of his horse—he continued in command in the midst of the fire until late in the night, when that action terminated.

The battle of Churubusco, one of the bloodiest battles of the war, was fought the next day. On this occasion I was ordered by General Scott to take command of Pierce's brigade and the mountain howitzer battery, in addition to my own two regiments, and with this force to fall on the enemy's rear and cut off his retreat. Pierce and myself, with our united commands, proceeded as rapidly as the nature of the ground would permit to carry this order into faithful execution. Pierce was suffering dreadfully at this time from the injury of the preceding day, and, as General Scott himself says in his report, was only "just able to keep the saddle." As we approached the enemy's position, directly under his fire, we encountered a deep ditch, or rather a deep, narrow, slimy canal, which had been previously used for the purpose of irrigation. It was no time to hesitate; so we both plunged in. The horse I happened to ride that day was a light, active Mexican horse. This circumstance operated in my favor, and enabled me to extricate myself and horse after considerable difficulty. Pierce, on the contrary, was mounted on a large, heavy American horse, and man and horse both sank down and rolled over in the ditch. There I was compelled to leave him; for, being in charge of the whole command, I had not a single moment to spare, and the manner in which a few moments are employed on such an occasion may determine the fortune of a field and the fate of an army. After struggling there I cannot say how long, he extricated himself from his horse, and hurried on foot to join his command, then closely engaged in a desperate contest with the enemy; and there he remained till, overcome by suffering and exhaustion, he sank on the ground, and was carried all but lifeless from the field.

This is a true statement of facts in relation to General Pierce at Churubusco; and this statement I would have made at San Augustin, four days after the battle, when I made my official report, but the brigade having rejoined its division immediately after the action, the officers, instead of reporting to me, who commanded them in battle, made their report to their division commander; and, as his report of an action which he had no opportunity to witness cannot be very circumstantial, I think it due to military justice to make this statement at this time, when my silence might be liable to misconstruction. Whoever takes the trouble to read my report of this engagement, dated at San Augustin, Mexico, August 24, 1847, will find the following paragraph:

"Pierce's brigade, under my command in this action, lost a considerable number in killed and wounded; amongst the latter was the gallant Colonel Morgan of the 15th. This command having rejoined its division, I have yet received no official report of its loss."

As I never received this report, of course I could make no official statement on the subject.

As my only object in introducing this matter is

to place the military conduct of General Pierce, while under my command, in its true light before the public, I do not deem it necessary to follow him through the rest of the campaign, where that conduct has never been the subject of injurious criticism. Permit me to say, in conclusion, that in reference to General Pierce's courage and conduct in Mexico, I only do for him what I would be ready to do for any other gallant officer with whom I had the honor to serve—that is, declare the truth in vindication of his military reputation.

I regret the unexpected length of this letter, but the importance of the subject must constitute my apology.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

JAS. SHIELDS.

To Messrs. H. B. McGinnis, Matthew Plumstead, John J. Crawford, and others, Galena, Illinois.

The following extracts of letters from Brevet Major Winship, Gen. Pillow, and Col. Wynkoop, need no elucidation. The manly, modest, and touching tribute of the gallant and high-toned Winship to the services of Pierce, must satisfy all minds and win all hearts:

[From the Albany Argus.]

GEN. PIERCE AND HIS ASSAILANTS.

*A noble vindication by a brother officer.*

TROR, N. Y., July 13, 1852.

DEAR SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of yesterday, requesting me to state, for publication in the Argus, the result of my observation in respect to the conduct and bearing of General Pierce, as an officer, in the late Mexican war.

In view of the intimate official and social relations which for several months subsisted between the General and myself, and which gave me ample opportunities for observing his conduct, both as an officer and a man, I feel that, in justice to him, I cannot do less than comply with your request—particularly, as my silence would seem to imply that I acknowledged the justice of the ferocious attacks which have been made upon him, of late, by a reckless and unscrupulous partisan press.

To those who have been associated in arms with General Pierce, a formal defence of his character as a capable and patriotic officer, a gallant soldier, and an accomplished and high-toned gentleman, would seem wholly uncalled for, if not absolutely absurd and ridiculous. No one who knows him well has ever, to my knowledge, questioned his capacity, his courage, or his patriotism, until he reluctantly allowed himself to be made the standard-bearer of a great national political party for the coming presidential campaign. This, indeed, is the head and front of his offending, and is the cause, no doubt, of those astounding discoveries, so much to his prejudice, which have been made by his political enemies, in regard to his military career. \* \* \* Of one thing I am certain; and that is, if the united testimony of

the whole body of officers of the "Old Army" is to be regarded as of any value in establishing the reputation of General Pierce, as an officer and a gentleman, he has but little to apprehend as to the verdict which will eventually be rendered him in these respects; for I hazard nothing in saying that the General left the service in higher favor with the "Old Guard," than did any other man of the new levies. This partiality for him, on the part of the officers of the regular army, was all the more remarkable, as he was supposed, at first, to be inimical to the service, and especially to the Military Academy. It is but just, however, to state that both parties, upon a thorough acquaintance with each other, found it necessary to change their previous opinions and to give up their former prejudices regarding each other. \* \* \*

My acquaintance with General Pierce dates from the period at which the American army became concentrated in the "Bosin of Mexico." I was ordered to report to him for duty, as the chief of the staff of his brigade, but the day before the army commenced its movement around the south side of Lake Chalco, on to the city of Mexico.

\* \* \* I was most agreeably surprised and delighted with the manner and bearing of my new commander, whom I now saw for the first time, and who received me with an open, manly, and soldier-like frankness and cordiality which completely charmed me, and made me forget that we had not been comrades of a dozen campaigns. After an interval of general conversation, the all-absorbing topic of the army, relative to the war in which we were engaged, naturally came in review. The motives he assigned for taking a part in the war were peculiarly characteristic, and were so different from any of those which were generally supposed to have actuated the mass of our citizens, who rushed by thousands and tens of thousands to the theatre of action, that I could not but be struck with them.

He said, in substance, as nearly as I can now recollect, that in his section of the Union the war was very unpopular; that he, nevertheless, was among those who believed it to be a just one, and that, whether just or not, now that it had commenced, it ought to be prosecuted with vigor to a favorable termination. After so decided a stand as he had taken in behalf of the policy of the government, and on the subject of the justice, the expediency, and the necessity even of the war, he knew, he said, that it would never do for him to shrink from any of the legitimate consequences of the views he had urged upon his fellow-countrymen—adding, what I then readily believed, and of which I am now more than ever convinced, that he had not the least disposition to avoid those consequences, although he had nothing to play for in the great game of war which was then going on—having already declined higher honors than it were possible for him, at his time of life, to win in another and an untired career. When, therefore, New England was called upon to furnish her quota of men for the war, he felt bound, in consistency, not only to offer his own services, but to exert his influence in obtaining those of his fellow-citizens.

From this conversation, I at once became satisfied that the leading motive of General Pierce in coming to Mexico was patriotism, pure and undiluted by any one selfish or sordid motive; and be-

lieving this, I should have respected him, even though his military career had been a total failure. But his military career was not a failure, as there is an abundance of evidence to prove. His march from Vera Cruz to Puebla is conceded on all hands to have been of the most brilliant and successful of the war, and drew from the whole army, from the general-in-chief to the lowest subaltern, a generous and unqualified commendation. This march was performed in midsummer, under a burning tropical sun, and through a country infested with innumerable bands of "guerrilleros," and singularly favorable for their operations. With these active and ferocious banditti the General had several skirmishes, in one of which, in particular, he displayed no less courage and gallantry as a soldier, than capacity and conduct as a commander. At the "Puente Nacional," in leading on a party of his men against a barricade on the bridge, he received a bullet through his hat, whilst another grazed his cheek, producing no material damage, fortunately, in either case, but proving, at the same time, that he was not more backward in making himself acquainted with the arguments of war than with those of the law.

The same gallant and soldier-like bearing marked the conduct of the General on an occasion which came under my own observation. It was during the evening attack upon the enemy's entrenched camp at Contreras that Pierce's brigade was ordered to the support of Smith's, in an attempt upon the front of the Mexican position. The route which these troops were obliged to pursue, for some three-quarters of a mile, lay along a rough and narrow road through the *pedregal*, and under a heavy fire from the Mexican batteries. It is well known to military men that, of all the terrors of battle, there are none more dreaded by raw recruits than a storm of heavy shot and shells. In this species of warfare, (a favorite one, by the way, with the Mexicans,) General Pierce was as inexperienced as the new levies he commanded; but he weathered the iron tempest like an old veteran, and well knowing the effect of a word fitly spoken, in a crisis like this, he posted himself conspicuously in the line of the enemy's heaviest fire, which was then concentrated upon Magruder's battery, and addressed his men, as they defiled past him, in language so appropriate and spirit-sustaining, that none but the veriest coward and poltroon that ever skulked from danger could have resisted the eloquent appeal he made to the pride and patriotism of those whom he was wont to call his "brave New England boys." The effect of his words was magical, especially upon the New Englanders, nearly all of whom were personally known to him, and almost worshipped him. It was here that the General, in attempting to cross the *pedregal*, (an enormous bed of volcanic rocks,) on horseback, was violently thrown to the ground, in consequence of his horse stepping into a concealed fissure of the rocks, and falling with, and partly on his master. The effect of the shock was such as, for a time, to render the General almost insensible, and his injuries were so serious that it was with great difficulty he could be lifted into his saddle, and kept there while the troops were retiring to their bivouac for the night.

The night of the 19th of August, 1847, will ever be remembered by the Americans who were then in the valley of Mexico, and especially by those

who passed it on the field of Contreras. It was as dark as erebus, and a cold drenching rain came on which soaked us to, and even through the skin. The only thing in the shape of a shelter from the deluge which was pouring down upon us consisted of the wagons of the engineer company and of the light batteries which chanced to be on the field, and these were filled with the wounded. The General managed, however, to find a partial cover in or under one of these wagons for the night; but when morning came, it found him so stiffened from the effects of his bruises and the cold wet air that he could scarcely move. He nevertheless persisted in taking the saddle, although he was utterly incapable of getting into it without assistance. In the mean time General Persifer F. Smith, the hero of this field, who had been actively and indefatigably engaged all night long in gaining the rear of the enemy's entrenched camp, came thundering down upon the astonished Mexicans, a little after sunrise, like an alpine avalanche. The scene was too exciting for so ardent and enthusiastic a temperament as that of General Pierce, and forgetting his physical pains in the exultation of his spirits, he hurried to join in the pursuit of the already flying foe. Arrived at the town of San Angel, some six miles from the field of Contreras, a halt was directed in order to refresh the troops and prepare them for the great struggle of the day, yet to come, in which hundreds of gallant fellows, now flushed with the morning's victory, were destined to find their next repose in the sleep of death. The General was, even now, paying the penalty of his over-exertion and excitement in the pursuit; and his aid-de-camp, Lieutenant (now Brevet Major) Fitzgerald, and myself, both urged him to go no farther, as he would, sooner or later, be forced to yield to physical weakness and pain. A little further on, and at the church of Coyacan, where the commander-in-chief habitually held himself during the battle of Churubusco, we casually encountered that officer, who, having been informed of General Pierce's mishap of the evening before, and seeing the difficulty with which he kept the field, kindly added the weight of his influence and authority to the importunities of Lieutenant Fitzgerald and myself, in order to dissuade General Pierce from going into the action, now already commenced. The General, however, was immovable in his determination to lead his brigade into the engagement, and the reasons he offered for so doing were too forcible and too consonant with the soldierly feelings of those who surrounded him, to admit of any farther remonstrance or expostulation. From this time I was separated from him until the battle was over, and cannot, therefore, speak of my own personal knowledge of what befel him or how he deported himself in the ever-memorable conflict of that day. He accompanied the two regiments of his brigade then at hand (the 12th and 15th) in an operation which had for its object the turning of the enemy's position and the intercepting of his retreat towards the capital, whilst I was sent for the 9th or New England regiment, which, together with a section of the Mountain Howitzer Battery, had been previously posted on one of the roads leading from San Angel to the city, but was now ordered to join the brigade. Agreeably to my instructions I hurried in this detachment, and arrived at the



position occupied by Shields's and Pierce's troops, at a moment when no little confusion prevailed in their ranks, owing to a galling flank and reverse fire which they were then receiving from the enemy. Seeing no one on the ground at the moment, authorized to give instructions relative to the troops I had brought, I took the responsibility of posting them, in the General's name, perpendicular to the left of General Shields's line, in order to show front to the enemy hovering on our left flank. Having made this disposition of the New England regiment, I remained with it until the close of the battle. I am thus minute in these particulars, in order to show how I came to be separated from General Pierce during the entire engagement, as well as to explain certain passages of his official report, which might otherwise appear unsatisfactory. In the meantime, I have it from several reliable sources that General Pierce was on the field, and was as much exposed as any other man in it, though, unfortunately for him and for his command, he was unable to participate actively in the struggle. Lieutenant Fitzgerald, than whom a more gallant soldier and chivalric gentleman does not exist, informed me, immediately after the battle, that he was continually by the side of the General, except when carrying his orders to the troops, and that, owing to the difficulties of the ground over which he had to struggle, (it being soft and yielding, and cut up by many broad and deep ditches,) in his then weak and bruised condition, he finally fell, faint and completely exhausted, within the range of the enemy's musketry on the one side and his cavalry escape-tas on the other; thus showing that, if he had intended to avoid the dangers of the field, he made a most unfortunate selection of a hiding place; for the ground on which he is said to have fallen is a dead level, and was incapable of affording the least shelter from the cross-fire which raked nearly every foot of its surface. \* \* \*

General Pierce, as is well known, was selected by the General-in-Chief one of the commissioners to settle the terms of the armistice which was proposed immediately after the battle of Churubusco—an evidence of the confidence which General Scott had in his abilities, diplomatic as well as military. \* \* \*

At Molino del Rey General Pierce rendered good service in relieving Worth's division, after the long and sanguinary conflict maintained by that gallant corps. His brigade was posted some miles off when the action begun, but arrived in time to take the place of Worth's troops and bring off their killed and wounded from under the guns of Chepultepec and the fire of the enemy's musketry posted in the wood behind the mills.—His gallant bearing on this occasion attracted particular attention. \* \* \*

To claim for General Pierce the title of a great military chieftain would be to ask more for him than it were possible that a man, with the military capacity of a Napoleon, even, could earn in so short a military career, and much more than he ever dreamed of claiming for himself. There is no man more sensible than himself of a truth which is but too little appreciated in this country, namely: that war is a science, which, considered in all its various and complex details and combinations, is thoroughly understood but by a very small portion even of those who have made it

their profession, and have passed the best part of their lives in the camp. General Pierce never, for a moment, flattered himself that military rank, of necessity, confers corresponding military qualifications—an illusion but too common among those who have been newly invested with it. He frankly and honestly acknowledged his comparative ignorance and inexperience in military matters, and, like the gallant and lamented General Hauser, was ever ready to listen to the suggestions of experience, come from whence they might. \* \*

But the chief merit of General Pierce's military career consists in his having left the peaceful occupations of his previous life, giving up a lucrative practice, upon which he and his family were dependent for support, and hurrying to the tented field without the hope, expectation or wish, even, of additional honors or emoluments, present or prospective, but simply in obedience to his country's call, and with the view, alone, to vindicate her integrity and promote her interests. He who takes up his country's cause merely for the advantages which will accrue to himself by so doing, is deserving of no more credit than attaches to any other commendable act suggested by interested motives; but he who, on the contrary, sacrifices private interests for the public good, is entitled to consideration, not only for the benefits he confers, but for the motives which prompted them. Such a man, if there ever was one, I verily believe to be General Frank Pierce—the most sincere and ardent patriot, I have no hesitation in saying, that I ever knew. I do not make this assertion in a mere strain of exaggerated eulogy, as any one can bear me witness who has had half an hour's conversation with the General upon those incidents in our country's history of which every true American is proud. \* \* \*

In conclusion, my dear sir, I wish it distinctly understood that the foregoing statement of facts and impressions, relative to General Pierce, are intended merely as a refutation of some of the base slanders which have been uttered concerning his character and conduct as an officer in the late war with Mexico. They are not designed to have the least bearing upon the issue of the great political contest which is now near at hand, and in which General Pierce is arrayed in antagonism to the illustrious chief of the military body to which I have the honor, as an humble and insignificant member, to belong. I have said here no more for the one than I have frequently urged for the other, under similar circumstances, nor no more than I would feel it an imperative duty to say for any brother officer whom I believed to be grossly calumniated.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

O. F. WINSHIP,  
Major U. S. Army.

To SHERMAN CROSWELL, Esq., Albany, N. Y.

Letter from General Pillow.

COLUMBIA, Penn., July 8, 1852.

To the Editor of the *Nashville Union*: As everything touching the character of General Pierce, as well as the opinion of our public men, now interests the public, I have thought it not improper to give you for publication an extract of a private

letter of the late ex-President Polk, written to myself on the 18th day of May, 1847, and delivered to me in the city of Puebla, Mexico. The extract is as follows, viz :

"Your two brigadier-generals, Pierce and Cadwalader, who will be under your immediate command, are noble men. General Pierce is now the first man in New England. He is a man of fine talents. He is my personal friend, and you may fully confide in him. He was with me in the House of Representatives for several years, and was afterwards in the Senate. Gen. Cadwalader is a gentleman of high character and of decided military reputation. You may well be proud of two such officers under your command."

In the operations of the army in the valley of Mexico, that General Pierce fully sustained the exalted opinion of ex-President Polk will be seen by reference to the reports of Major-Generals Scott and Worth and those of my own. These despatches were all prepared with a personal knowledge of the gallant bearing of Gen. Pierce, and at a time and under circumstances exempting those officers from any possible motive to over-estimate the importance of his services or the character of his conduct. The reports of the first and last of these officers agree in the statement of fact, that General Pierce was severely injured by the fall of his horse on the rocks of the pedregal while gallantly leading his brigade in the battle of Contreras. They also bear full testimony to the fact, that though so badly injured, he might have retired to the hospital as disabled for duty, and "though barely able to keep his saddle," yet he remained upon duty, and led his gallant brigade into the bloody battle of Churubusco.

Letter from Colonel Wynkoop.

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 9, 1852.

GENTLEMEN: I am obliged to you for your letter of the 6th July, and take great pleasure in promptly replying to it. During the last war with Mexico I knew General Franklin Pierce personally and well; but it is proper to say that it was not my good fortune to participate with him in those several battles wherein he earned for himself so justly the high reputation of a gallant soldier and a good general.

My knowledge of General Pierce was, however, the reflected opinion of the whole army. From the rank and file upward he was universally regarded as a discriminating, self-sacrificing, and devoted officer. The men esteemed it a favor to serve with him, and officers deemed themselves unusually fortunate to be brigaded under his command.

General Pierce was afterwards offered the appointment of brigadier-general, which he accepted, and immediately entered upon the duties of his new position with alacrity and decision. He arrived at Vera Cruz during the most pestilential season of the whole year, (June 28, 1847,) and found there a camp filled with disease and death. Leaving that point in the middle of July with the 9th, 12th, and 15th infantry, (in all about 2,500 men,) he made one of the most rapid and suc-

cessful marches recorded during the whole war. His troops were new, and to a great extent undisciplined; the road was beset with guerillas along the whole line, and the heat was intensely oppressive; yet steadily, firmly, and bravely he encountered these difficulties—always leading, always encouraging—until he reported to Scott at Puebla, with slighter loss, in proportion to the size of his command, than that sustained by any other commander under like circumstances. At the National Bridge, when attacked by guerillas, he led his command against the barricades, and in the charge received a ball through his hat. The news of his successful progress had preceded him to Perote, and upon his arrival there I found in him all that could attach the respect and admiration of a soldier.

General Pierce saw his first general battle at Contreras, August 19, 1847.

General Pierce was ordered forward with the 9th and 12th regiments at about 2 o'clock, and it was late in the evening of the same day, after having been exposed to a murderous fire of more than three hours, that his horse fell and injured him. An old friend of mine, and an officer of distinction, tells me that at the time of Pierce's advance upon Valencia's camp at Contreras he was standing beside Major General Twiggs, watching their approach, and as they came up under that withering fire, led by an officer on a black horse, Twiggs exclaimed, "By heavens! it is the gallant old 3d; see how steadily they move up." It was the 9th infantry, and Pierce leading!

Although severely hurt, and sufficiently to have justified his retiring under surgical treatment, we find him again in the field on the next day; and here I propose to give General Scott's own testimony to his conduct. In his report of August 28th, when speaking of the occurrences on the 20th, he says: "Accordingly, the two advanced divisions and Shields's brigade marched from Contreras, under the immediate orders of General Pillow, who was now joined by the gallant Brigadier General Pierce of his division, personally thrown out of activity late the evening before by a severe hurt, received from the fall of his horse."

General Pierce's services, however, did not end here; for on the 8th of September we find him with the 9th and 2d regiments of infantry, under a heavy fire from the batteries at Chepultepec, covering successfully the retreat of Cadwalader and Garland's brigades from the field at Molino del Rey.

Very respectfully, your friend and fellow-citizen,  
FRANCIS M. WYNKOOP.

To Messrs. Strange N. Palmer, Joseph Weaver, Henry Geis, Isaac M. Cake, R. M. Palmer, and Edward Kerns.

Extracts of a letter from Lieutenant Drum, U. S. Army

FORT BRADY, SAUT ST. MARIE, (MICH.)  
July 20, 1852.

DEAR SIR: In reply to your interrogatory respecting the absurd allegation that "General Pierce managed to faint at the commencement of every battle" during the campaign in the valley of Mexico, I will give you the following detailed statement, as an eye-witness of most, if not all, General Pierce's movements during those engagements.

On the 18th of August, 1847, General Pierce was directed to act with his brigade as a supporting force to that portion of Gen. Twigg's division ordered to attack in front the enemy's position at Contreras.

In complying with these instructions, he was exposed to a continued discharge of round shot and shells. The General was at this time mounted and riding along a ledge of pedregal, (volcanic rock.) After having advanced with his force about half a mile, directly towards the enemy's work, the fire from their battery became very severe; the air being filled with missiles, his horse took flight and fell with him on the ledge, throwing the General some distance and injuring him very severely. The general impression at the time was that those who witnessed the accident was, that he was either killed or severely wounded.

He was, I think, when this accident happened, in advance of his brigade, and certainly displayed during that engagement as much gallantry as any one whose actions came under my observation.

Though seriously disabled, as was indeed evident from his physical appearance, he remained in the field that night, and insisted upon joining in the contest on the morning of the 20th; and although it was with difficulty he could retain his seat on horseback, yet he led his command into the engagement at Churubusco. \* \* \*

Gen. Pierce's conduct during his march from Vera Cruz to Puebla was certainly sufficient to shield him from so foul an accusation as the one above quoted.

Within my own knowledge he was frequently exposed to the enemy's fire, and upon every occasion conducted himself with that propriety that should characterize the conduct of every brave and true soldier. \* \* \*

There was, however, one great military virtue that Gen. Pierce never failed to exercise. I allude, sir, to his unceasing efforts to alleviate the sufferings and necessary privations of the men under his command. It was with him a duty to contribute with kind words and attentions to the comfort of the sick and wounded soldiers, and from his personal means secured them many necessities of which they were destitute. \* \* \*

I am, sir, respectfully, yours,

RICHARD C. DRUM,

Lieutenant 4th Artillery, U. S. A.

Hon. CHARLES SHALEK.

*Extract of a letter from Capt. George Bowers, an officer of the 9th regiment during the Mexican war, to S. A. Hammett, Esq.*

NASHUA, July 8, 1852.

DEAR SIR: Engagements that could not well be deferred have prevented me from giving an earlier answer to your letter of the 23d ult. \* \* \*

I have been well acquainted with Gen. Pierce for at least fifteen years. \* \* \* His great eminence as a lawyer, and signal success and ability as an advocate, you doubtless know. \* \* \*

But I desire to say that I have never known a man with a kinder heart, one who performed more honorably or more readily all the duties devolving upon the private citizen, or who exhibited a daily life more worthy of universal commendation, than General Pierce. The infamous falsehoods which unscrupulous partisans have circulated, with re-

gard to the public and private character of Gen. Pierce, since his nomination for the presidency, need no refutation where he is personally known. They can do no injury anywhere where a desire for truth shall be sufficient to prompt an investigation of their falsity.

A word as to his brief but brilliant military career. I belonged to the 9th infantry, of which he was originally colonel, and served in his brigade through the campaign from first to last. When the 9th infantry arrived at Vera Cruz, June 28, 1847, troops from different sections of the country, the 9th and 12th infantry, two companies of cavalry, a corps of marines, and detachments, numbering, of all arms, about twenty-five hundred men, were assembled there, or, rather, at Camp Vergara, below the city. It was in the midst of the vomito season, and the General, without a day's delay, devoted himself to a thorough organization of the mixed elements of his command, and a preparation for the march to join Gen. Scott at Puebla. Gen. Pierce's eye was everywhere, and his labor and exposure in the work of preparation were amazing. He maintained rigid discipline, which was indispensable; but, at the same time, by his admirable judgment and real kindness, and unremitting attentions to the wants of all, he secured not only the respect, but the affection of all—a respect and affection which were maintained under all the privations and hardships of the march and the severe service in the valley. We all regarded him not only as our safe and ever gallant commander, but, as it were, our father. No real grievance of officer or soldier was ever brought to his notice without redress.

I have seen him under fire many times, and his bearing was always marked by an intrepidity and coolness that commanded perfect confidence, and his entire disregard of personal danger excited on the part of his command the highest enthusiasm. This was eminently the case at the National Bridge, where the variation of the eighth of an inch in the range of the ball that struck his hat from his head would have cost him his life, and also at Contreras and Churubusco. His endurance, fortitude, and vigilance, under all circumstances, could not be surpassed. His judgment was quick, and when once formed, execution followed with the rapidity of light. His daring intrepidity, known to all who participated with him in danger, and who were inspired by his example, no one but an infamous blackguard and coward would deny. This will be affirmed by all good officers and men—whether of the old army or new levies—who served with General Pierce. His assiduous attentions to the wants and comforts of the feeble, the sick, and the wounded, have borne to him the blessings of many who are now dead, and will continue to bear to him the grateful blessings of many who survived. \* \* \*

You have perfect liberty to make such use of this letter as you may deem proper.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE BOWERS

S. A. HAMMETT, Esq., New York City.

*Extract of a private letter from Brevet Major B. S. Roberts, regiment of mounted rifles, to his father, first published in the Vermont Patriot.*

WASHINGTON, D. C., August 1, 1852.

MY DEAR FATHER: In answer to your letter of

of my personal knowledge of General Pierce's military services in Mexico, I feel some distrust, as an officer of the old line, that a natural bias against citizen generals may operate to prevent a candid avowal of their value. Nevertheless, I will state the facts of my own knowledge, and I doubt not you will see that I am just to your "*model's attemon and general.*"

I was in Puebla when it was first generally known that General Pierce was on his march from Vera Cruz to that place in command of several new regiments and recruits for the old army. Such reliable information had reached General Scott, about the 25th July, that the guerillas were in great numbers strongly entrenched in the passes of the La Hoya, that he detached Smith's brigade, with reinforcements of dragoons and Domingoe's spies, to go to Pierce's relief. This command rapidly marched in that direction as far as "Ojo Agua," where General Smith received intelligence that Pierce had brushed away the forces that were entrenched at La Hoya, and that he was moving rapidly down the western slope towards Puebla.

General Smith returned to that city with the welcome intelligence that Pierce had fought his way through every pass from the Puente Nacional, and had effectually disorganized and defeated the entire guerilla forces. His arrival at Puebla spread satisfaction throughout the army, and a sentiment of invincibility seemed for the first time to pervade the whole line. No officer properly regarding his military reputation would, when General Pierce reached Puebla, have put it at hazard by the denial of his claim to be ranked with skilful and successful generals.

Again, I can speak of General Pierce from personal observation. On the 19th August (as you know) I was detached from Twiggs's division as an advanced guard, with the command of two companies of the rifles, with orders from that general to clear the pedregal in front of Comeras of its pickets and skirmishers, and on getting close enough to the works for a sure reconnaissance, to send for him. This was done; and while Gen. Twiggs was with me, within two hundred yards of the enemy's works, estimating their force and strength, we noticed their sudden change of guns and rapid firing in a new direction. In a short time we observed our troops making their way through the pedregal to our right and rear. Not knowing their purpose, we carefully watched their bearing, exposed as they were to one of the most rapid artillery fires, from some 23 guns, I have ever witnessed. Round shot and shells fell among them like hail-stones. On they pressed, unchecked by destruction, unappalled by danger. We continued anxiously regarding them, until General Twiggs suddenly exclaimed, "By G—d, it's the old third—see how beautifully they stand it!" This force proved to be Pierce's brigade, he leading in the fact of the fire I have described. No

lament Ransom of our State, mistaken by Twiggs for the veteran 3d infantry. *This I saw and heard.* It was under this fire that his horse became unmanageable; and falling among the lava rocks, General Pierce was disabled.

I saw nothing more of General Pierce until the next day, at the halt of the army at Coyacan, a few minutes before the commencement of the terrible battle of Churubusco. He was then suffering from the injury received by the fall of his horse in the pedregal, but resolved upon remaining with his brigade. I have conversed with many officers who saw him under the wasting fire of musketry that thinned with its destruction the ranks of his and Shields's brigades. In their opinions I have undoubting reliance, and their universal sentiment has been, that officers and men alike in these brigades bore with unyielding constancy the brunt of the conflict. The gallant bearing of these two generals, Pierce and Shields, was as household words in the army. There, to its credit be it told that none are found so insensible to honor as to breathe upon their well-earned laurels a breath that could soil their freshness, or waste a leaf that should remain green forever.

I have now, my dear father, in candor told you all that of my own observation I know of Pierce's military history. Beyond this, it is known that General Scott, in his despatches, commended him in terms of praise, and gave him a title that he seldom mistakenly bestows—"the gallant Pierce." Were General Scott now in a position to speak for himself, he would cause the libellers of a gallant officer, whose services greatly contributed to his glory and success, to blush at their ill-judged attempts to stain the honor of a tried soldier and an eminent citizen.

Pierce's modest bearing won him the universal esteem of the army, and his conduct in battle that title which detraction cannot alter nor thieves steal away—"the gallant Pierce." This was the christening of Gen. Scott, the high priest of the battles that baptised his army in blood, and whose seal on gallant men time will never change.

We have thus given the testimony of General Pierce's companions in arms in Mexico. They all unite in the fact that their opinions are the opinions of all the officers and men in that great drama of American history. We conclude the presentation of this evidence with the statement, that no respectable man in all that band of ten thousand men can be found to dispute or disprove the evidence thus presented in one essential particular.

How base must be the party power, and how desperate the future of that party which descends to such ignoble means to achieve success.







